

WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Annual Accreditation Report

April 1, 2006-March 31, 2007



WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE COMMISSION

2020 CAREY AVENUE, 8TH FLOOR

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*Casper College • Central Wyoming College • Eastern Wyoming College • Laramie County Community College
Northwest College • Sheridan College • Western Wyoming Community College*

ACCREDITATION BY THE HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), a commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA), accredits Wyoming's seven community colleges. Institutional accreditation is a voluntary process that serves the critical purposes of quality assurance and institutional and program improvement. Colleges that are accredited by the HLC continually evaluate their programs and overall institutions in light of the criteria for accreditation set forth by the HLC.

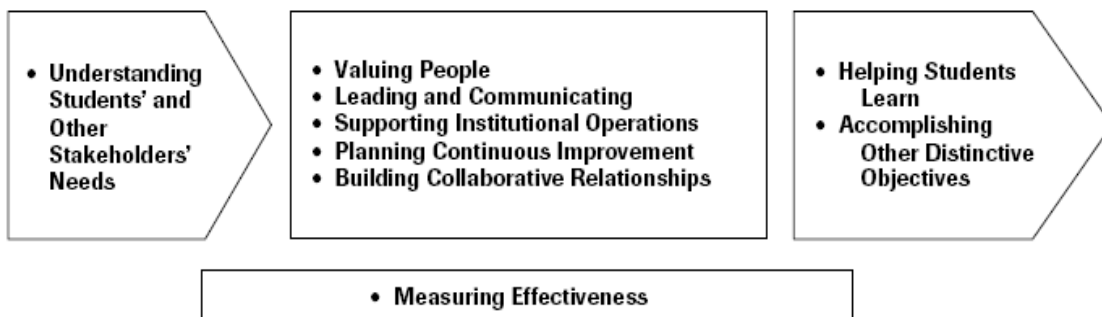
Currently, most of the Wyoming community colleges follow the HLC Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ) to maintain accreditation status. The PEAQ process for institutional accreditation is a continuous cycle. For approximately two years the institution conducts a Self-Study, which critically assesses all programs and aspects of the institution. Next, a team of peer evaluators conducts a Comprehensive Visit. The Team critically evaluates the Self-Study Report and the institution during the visit and subsequently makes a recommendation about reaffirmation of accreditation status. Some institutions are granted continued status with the stipulation that the institutions provide a written report (Progress, Monitoring, or Contingency) within a specified time period or a possible focused visit to examine specific aspects of an institution. The longest time period continued institutional accreditation is reaffirmed by the HLC is for ten years.

An alternate method by which colleges can maintain accreditation status is an HLC program called Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). Wyoming colleges have the option of applying to become part of the Academic Quality Improvement Program if they prefer a different approach to accreditation. AQIP is a program built around quality improvement categories with a focus on goal-setting, networking, and accountability activities (see categories below). The college engages in all AQIP processes (Strategy Forums, Annual Updates, Systems Portfolio Appraisals) and visits during a seven-year period. Currently, two Wyoming community colleges have applied and been accepted into AQIP: Laramie County Community College and Northern Wyoming Community College District.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

1. **Mission and Integrity:** the institution "operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students."
2. **Preparing for the Future:** the institution's "allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities."
3. **Student Learning and Effective Teaching:** the institution "provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission."
4. **Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge:** the institution "promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission."
5. **Engagement and Service:** "as called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value."

The Academic Quality Improvement Program Categories



WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACCREDITATION ACTIVITY 2006-2007

Because continued institutional accreditation is reaffirmed for various periods of time and institutions applied for candidacy at various times in the past, each of the Wyoming community colleges is at a different phase of the on-going institutional accreditation process. During the time period of April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007 five of the seven Wyoming community colleges had institutional accreditation activity. This summary is provided in compliance with W.S. 21-18-202(e)(i), which requires the Community College Commission to “report the findings of institutional and specialized accreditation studies.” An accreditation schedule is also included at the end of this summary for easy reference.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACCREDITATION SUMMARIES

CASPER COLLEGE (PEAQ STATUS)

Casper College (CC) in Casper experienced a substantial amount of accreditation activity this period. A Steering Committee Chair and principle Self-Study Author were selected and Criterion sub-committees met monthly to write the first draft of the Self-Study. Various campus climate and student satisfaction questionnaires were completed. Select members of the Steering Committee attended a one day HLC intensive workshop. It is anticipated the Self-Study will be revised this upcoming reporting period in anticipation of a spring campus mock-visit. The actual HLC visit is scheduled for March 23-24, 2009.

CENTRAL WYOMING COLLEGE (PEAQ STATUS)

Central Wyoming College (CWC) in Riverton did not have any official accreditation activity during the reporting period. However, CWC staff participated in HLC Assessment Workshops and attended the HLC Annual Meeting. Central Wyoming College’s next comprehensive visit is scheduled for 2015-2016.

EASTERN WYOMING COLLEGE (PEAQ STATUS)

Eastern Wyoming College (EWC) in Torrington did not have any official accreditation activity during the reporting period. EWC anticipates that new reports will be drafted and site visits will take place when their next self-study review is submitted to the HLC in 2010-2011.

LARAMIE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (AQIP STATUS)

Laramie County Community College (LCCC) in Cheyenne applied to participate in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) in the fall of 2006. On December 15, 2006, the college’s application to participate in AQIP was accepted. During the spring semester, LCCC began the process of transitioning to AQIP by appointing a Quality Council to coordinate activities and make recommendations to the college community. The college also conducted a self-assessment of its programs and processes and held a conversation day to collect input on possible projects for improvement. During the 2007 – 2008 academic year, the information gathered will be further refined into as many as three action projects on which efforts will be focused. As an action project is completed, another will be developed so that the college is continually striving to improve programs and services.

NORTHWEST COLLEGE (PEAQ STATUS)

Northwest College (NWC) in Powell did not have any official accreditation activity during the reporting period. Currently, there are no accreditation activities scheduled for NWC until a formal campus visit takes place in 2010-2011.

NORTHERN WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT (AQIP STATUS)

Northern Wyoming Community College District (NWCCD) in Sheridan and Gillette is participating in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) process. NWCCD continued working on three action projects relating to AQIP: to create a success curriculum for students who require developmental coursework, to develop an inclusive internal governance system, and, to develop and implement

comprehensive “one-stop” client services on the NWCCD campuses. During this reporting period, NWCCD has completed the internal governance project, and, finished the initial phase in establishing “one-stop” client services. Currently, ten areas of focus are under study by several college committees to assess a student’s “first year experience.” During the next reporting period, NWCCD will finish its first system portfolio, which analyzes nine different aspects of the institutional environment. This portfolio will be dynamic document for the District and will be reviewed by AQIP in the fall of 2007.

WESTERN WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE (PEAQ STATUS)

Western Wyoming Community College (WWCC) in Rock Springs submitted a Progress Report to the HLC in January 2007 regarding the deliverance of online degree programs. This report focused on six self-identified issues: professional development for faculty, program evaluation, delivery of lab science courses, counseling services, ADA services, and tutoring services for online students. On March 19, 2007, the Staff Analysis from HLC stated that “Western Wyoming Community College is to be commended for an excellent progress report, as well as the excellent progress it documented in that report.” The HLC accepted the report and require no further reports. WWCC’s next comprehensive evaluation is scheduled for 2013-14.

For the last two years, WWCC has worked to transition into the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). WWCC plans to submit a formal application for the AQIP process in the spring or summer of 2008.

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Accreditation Schedule Wyoming Community Colleges

Last updated: 4 October 2007

Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

References: 1. W.S. 21-18-202(e) (i) and (iii) 2. MIS Handbook, pages: Admin-10 and Accred-1	Last Comprehensive Visit	Focused Visit	Required Progress Report	Required Monitoring Report	Required Contingency Report	Next PEAQ Comprehensive Visit or AQIP Quality Checkup/ Site Visit
Casper College	January 1999	None Scheduled	None Due	None Due	None Due	2008-2009
Central Wyoming College	October 2005	None Scheduled	Dec 1, 2008	None Due	None Due	2015-2016
Eastern Wyoming College	February 2001	None Scheduled	None Due	None Due	None Due	2010-2011
Laramie County Community College	October 1999	None Scheduled	None Due	None Due	None Due	2010-2011
Northwest College	March 2001	None Scheduled	None Due	None Due	None Due	2010-2011
Northern Wyoming Community College District	November 1997	None Scheduled	None Due	None Due	None Due	2007-2008
Western Wyoming Community College	February 2004	None Scheduled	Jan 31, 2007	None Due	None Due	2013-2014